

From: CasadyD
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/24/01 4:35pm
Subject: Microsoft anti-trust - my comments

As a computer technician (and former educator) at a small, private college, I have followed with interest, the proceedings in the Microsoft anti-trust settlement case.

For what it's worth, below is a summary of the "Microsoft Effect" as I see it at our college.

* The Windows 9x, NT and 2000 server and desktop operating system products were purchased because they promised a greater "ease of use" and lower "training time" than other products (Mac OS, Linux, Unix, VMS) It has NOT lived up to this promise. The products are "buggy" and take HOURS of wasted time applying security patches, updates, service packs, hot-fixes, etc.

As a user of Unix, Linux and MacOS as well as Windows, I can assure you that it is not "easier" than any of the competing products in any respect.

* the Microsoft products including Office 95/97/2000 and Internet Explorer and Media Player have effectively prevented the "practical" use of any other similar products. (Corel Wordperfect suite, Netscape and QuickTime media player for example) The competing products can usually be installed, but the time and effort it takes in "man-hours" to support them on the Windows "integrated" operating systems, makes it impractical. Virtually all of the Microsoft product installers, updaters, service packs and "bug" fixes, reset all settings to "optimize the system for use and "integration" with the Microsoft products." i.e. it changes our custom settings back to the Microsoft defaults. It is nearly impossible for our small staff to keep up with the continual "resetting" of preferences to make the competing products work again.

* Microsoft "internet" products relating to the Explorer browser, IIS server AND the DEVELOPMENT and back-end products (like SQL) for these programs make any website created with them functional only by a system using Windows operating system and the Internet Explorer browser. Use of Java, connections to SQL databases, etc. becomes a technical nightmare if they must "integrate" with the Microsoft products. For example, I can edit our website ONLY from a system running Windows OS with Internet Explorer 4 or greater. I cannot edit it from any system using the Netscape browser (or any other browser like Opera, iCab or OmniWeb), or from MacOS, even running the latest Microsoft Internet Explorer software for MacOS.

* We originally purchased Microsoft products because they offered "Professional technical support" unlike the myriad of "open source"

products like Linux. However we have found that each call to Microsoft support, at the rate of \$500 per call, is greeted with the same response..."we have never seen that problem before." To date we have 4 of our last six support calls "closed" by Microsoft as "solved" (from their standpoint), even though the problem with their product is NOT resolved on our end. e.g. they essentially said "It *should* work, but still doesn't... oh well, good luck, and call again (for \$500) if you have any more problems."

* We are now essentially "trapped" and forced to continue using their faulty products. We have so much time and money invested in them that there is really no way that we can financially drop Microsoft and switch to other products. Due to the problems with integrating the Microsoft products with other platforms, it is also practically impossible for us to "wean" away from the use of Microsoft.

All-in-all we feel cheated, trapped and caught in an endless cycle of "service packs", forced upgrades, and the inability to use any products other than Microsoft... we are like the professional equivalent of an "abused child".

Sincerely,

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